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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 8, 2009, at 2 p.m.

Senate

FRIDAY, AUGUST 7, 2009

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JEFF MERKLEY, a Senator from the State of Oregon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, who comes with light and life, we praise and adore You. As the Senate anticipates the August break, we pause to thank You for sustaining us and request Your continuing mercies in the days to come. May the time away from this Chamber be restorative and constructive as our lawmakers connect with family, friends, and constituents. Give traveling mercies to our Senators and staffers, particularly those who will be traveling overseas.

Lord, we ask Your special blessings upon our 2009 summer page class and thank You for their faithful service. As they leave, bless and keep them in their coming and going, their labor and leisure, their successes and failures, their joys and sorrows.

Lord, give us such a vision of Your purposes that we will seize every opportunity to be agents of Your grace.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JEFF MERKLEY led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, August 7, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JEFF MERKLEY, a Senator from the State of Oregon, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. MERKLEY thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

EXTENDING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is really an understatement to say that the cur-

rent economic downturn is the worst the country has experienced in several generations. The reality is that the crisis President Obama inherited when he was elected President was severe—worse than anything the country has seen since the Great Depression. When he took office, the country was losing 700,000 jobs a month. Banks were in crisis and had stopped lending, and a number of them were teetering on bankruptcy and some went out of business. The President and the Congress acted swiftly and passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which has stopped the bleeding and avoided economic catastrophe.

People complain: Look at all the deficit spending. In December, I was at a meeting with a small number of people. We had Mark Zandi, JOHN MCCAIN's economic adviser during the campaign, and we had economic advisers to Democratic and Republican Presidents in years past. Every one of them said: The only money in the world is in Washington, and unless you spend some of it, there will be a worldwide depression. We listened, and that is why we did what we did.

Today, the July unemployment numbers have been reported. They paint a much better picture than was anticipated. It was anticipated that 340,000 jobs would be lost, and that is not the case. The case is that over 200,000 jobs have been lost—a terribly large number but certainly much better than anyone ever anticipated. It is the lowest number since the spring of 2008. It is now late summer 2009. The national unemployment rate actually fell last month by one-tenth of 1 percent. It is welcome

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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